**Accessing Valid Health Information, Products, and Services**

Finding valid sources of reliable health information, products, and services is a health skill that could save your life. Take time to identify specific information, products, or services that you need. Once you find these items, evaluate them to make sure you have found the most reliable, healthful sources available. Follow the steps below to master this health skill.

1. **Identify health information, products, and services you need.** Where do you look for reliable information about a health question?

**Health-care provider:** trained, licensed professional. Dentists, doctors, pharmacists, and nurse.

**Health service:** work performed by health-care provider. Cleaning teeth, filling a prescription, performing an operation, getting a vaccine.

**Health product:** made specifically to maintain or restore health. Toothbrush, toothpaste, floss, crutches, wheelchairs, bandages, glucose test kits, syringes.

**Health-care facility:** place where people receive health care. Hospitals, emergency-care facilities, clinics.

1. **Find health information, products, and services.** What do you need? You can find information about health topics in a doctor’s or dentist’s office, pharmacy, or grocery store. You can get health products from a health-care provider or parent/trusted adult.
2. **Evaluate health information, products, and services.** What is the source of the information? What are the qualifications of the person or group providing the information? Is the information up-to-date? Have reputable health-care professional evaluated the information? What is the purpose of the information? Does the information educate or merely appeal to your emotions? How can you obtain additional information? Does the information make realistic claims? Evaluate: Do I need this product? Do I understand what the product does and how to use it? Is it safe? Is it worth the price? Is the product/service of high quality? What can I do if not satisfied? What do consumer agencies say about the product/service?
3. **Take action when health information is misleading.** There are laws that protect the public from false advertising. **FDA-Food and Drug Administration-**govern the safety of food, drugs, medical devices, and cosmetics. Recall food, drug, medical devices, and cosmetic products for safety concerns. Maintain the FDA Consumer Affairs Information Line. **FTC-Federal Trade Commission-**check advertising practices. Stop or force changes in wording of ads. **CPSC-Consumer Product Safety Commission-**establish and enforce product safety standards. Recall products. **USPS-United States Postal Service-**protect the public when products or services are sold through the mail. Maintain Postal Crime Hotline 1-800-654-8896.

**Types of Health Resources: Governmental health and/or health professional groups.** Categories of Health Resources: Mental-emotional health, family and social health, growth and development, personal health and physical activity, alcohol, tobacco, and other drugs, consumer and community health, environmental health, injury prevention and safety, communicable and chronic diseases, and nutrition.

**Sources of reliable health information:** health-care professionals, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, Professional health-related organizations (Am. Heart Ass., Am. Cancer Society, Am. Medical Assoc., and the Am. Assoc. for Health Education), Medical journals, school counselor, library, and health teachers.